Definition: **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Play 1950 by US writer Tennessee Williams. Family tensions are revealed when a dying wealthy cotton planter, the repressive Big Daddy, makes known the terms of his will, which states that each of his sons must have children. The play ends with the suggestion that the childless son, an alcoholic struggling with homosexual guilt, will be saved by his wife, the ‘cat’ of the title.

Summary Article: **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**

*From Broadway Plays and Musicals: Descriptions and Essential Facts of More Than 14,000 Shows through 2007*

[24 March 1955] drama by Tennessee Williams [Morosco Thea; 694p PP, NYDCCA]. Greedy members of a wealthy Mississippi Delta family gather at the mansion of the clan's patriarch, the irascible Big Daddy (Burl Ives), to celebrate his birthday and to make sure their interests are well represented. His alcoholic son Brick (Ben Gazzara) doesn't care about Big Daddy's money but his determined wife Maggie (Barbara Bel Geddes) does and she lies to the old man saying she is pregnant to ensure that Brick is not cut out of the will. Family confrontations get heated, it is learned that Big Daddy is dying of cancer, and Maggie is determined to make her lie come true. *Also cast:* Mildred Dunnock, Madeleine Sherwood, Pat Hingle. One of the finest of all American plays, the original production boasted a superb cast directed by Elia Kazan. The Playwrights Company produced. Over the decades the drama has received hundreds of productions in America and around the world.

REVIVALS: 24 September 1974 [ANTA Thea; 160p]. Michael Kahn directed the production that originated at the American Shakespeare Festival in Connecticut and New York critics commended the expert mounting (using the playwright’s original ending) and the accomplished cast headed by Elizabeth Ashley (Maggie), Keir Dullea (Brick), Fred Gwynne (Big Daddy), and Kate Reid (Big Mama).

21 March 1990 [Eugene O’Neill Thea; 149p]. Movie star Kathleen Turner as Maggie was attractive enough to playgoers that the revival had a $2 million advance and the limited run was sold out soon after the mostly favorable reviews came out. Howard Davies directed, using Williams’ less sentimental ending and Daniel Hugh Kelly (Brick), Charles Durning (Big Daddy), and Polly Holliday (Big Mama) were also featured.

2 November 2003 [Music Box Thea; 145p]. Only Ned Beatty’s ferocious Big Daddy was roundly applauded by the press in this uneven production directed by Anthony Page. Film star Ashley Judd (Maggie) was the box office draw and she was supported by Jason Patrick as Brick. *Also cast:* Margo Martindale, Michael Mastro, Amy Hohn.
APA

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